

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

return to Avignon : " And, if he comes, it will not be in peaceful guise, but accompanied by martial fury; we are absolutely convinced that his presence will bring you nothing save war and devastation."¹ There were popular tumults in Rome; the Florentines continued to carry on the war round Bologna and Ascoli. Although the reception of the Curia by the Genoese had been cordial and enthusiastic, the Doge, even in the Pope's presence, declared himself unable to publish the papal processes against the Florentines in the city. The French cardinals exaggerated every report, represented the stormy weather as a divine warning, and urged the Pope to reconsider the situation. A consistory was held, at which it was proposed that they should return to Avignon, and Gregory was about to give way.

But the Pope still thought of Catherine, whom, apparently, he had not seen since his arrival. He feared to summon her to his presence, because of the comments and opposition this would excite among the cardinals, and thought it derogatory to his dignity to visit her openly in the day, when throngs of people were pressing to see her and hear her words. In the evening, on the day of the consistory, he went in disguise to the house of Orietta Scotti. Catherine fell at his feet; he bade her rise, for that he himself was a suppliant, and besought her to obtain him the grace to know what course he should adopt. After a long colloquy with her, Gregory departed, full of edification and with his courage restored.² He at once informed the cardinals of his resolution to proceed, and ordered the fleet to put to sea. On October 29, he set sail from Genoa, and Catherine was destined never again to see his face in this life.

Catherine herself was delayed at Genoa for some weeks after the Pope had left, partly by her unceasing labours for the salvation of souls, partly by an outbreak of sickness among her fellowship. Stefano Maconi tells us that they were almost all

¹ Gherardi, *of. cit.*, doc 309.

^a This incident is recorded only by Fra Tommaso in the *Supplementum*; Tantucci, pp. 48, 49. Cf. *Orations* III., the prayer that the Saint offered on this occasion.